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Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP (AGGREY) PFOR SCUL SN
SUBJ: SENGHOR SAYS ARAB PARTICIPATION THREATENS BACK CULTURAL FESTIVAL

FOR AF AND CU

1. DURING CALL MAY 12 BY AF/ W DIRECTOR AGGREY, PRESIDENT SENGHOR VOLUNTEERED STATEMENT THAT HIS DISAGREEMENT WITH NIGERIA' S GENERAL GOWON OVER ARAB PARTICIPATION NOW THREATENED 1975 SECOND WORLD FESTIVAL OF NEGRO ART. GOWAN AND NIGERIA' S SENIOR FESTIVAL ORGANIZER ENAHORO HAD ACQUIESCED TO NORTH AFRICAN DEMANDS THAT FESTIVAL BE ALL AFRICAN RATHER THAN BLACK AFRICAN, SENGHOR SAID, BUT THIS DECI-SION NOT ACCEPTABLE TO HIM AND OTHER FRANCOPHONE LEADERS. IF MAIN-TAINED, ANOTHER CONFERENCE SITE WOULD BE SOUGHT, POSSIBLY TRINIDAD, SICE AFTER DAKAR, SECOND FESTIVAL SHOULD BE IN ANGLOPHONE COUNTRY.

2. WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD ACCEPT PARTICIPATION OF BLACK CULTURAL
GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS FROM NORTH AFRICA, SENGHOR SAID THIS FORMULA FITTED IN PERFECTLY WITH ORGANIZERS' ORIGINAL CONCEPT OF FESTIVAL, WHICH FOCUSSED ON BLACK AFRICAN CULTURE AND ITS DIASPORA. FOR THE 1975 FESTIVAL THEY HOPED TO HAVE BLACK CULTURAL GROUPS FROM AS FAR AFIELD AS INDIA WHOSE DRAVIDIANS RECOGNIZED THEIR AFRICANITY. WHILE HE SUPPORTED CONTINENTAL CONCEPT OF ONE AFRICA AND
HAD WTTYSRZYER OREATER# UNDERSTANDING OF BOTH NEGRO AND BERBER AFRICAN
CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS, IDEA OF NORTH AFRICANS PARTICIPATING AS
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ARAB REPRESENTATIVES OF STATES WAS DIFFERENT MATTER. NORTH AFRICANS
DID NOT INVITE BLACK AFRICANS TO THEIR ARAB MEETINGS OR FESTIVALS, THERFORE SAW NO REASON WHY FESTIVAL SHOULD CHANGE ITS TERMS OF REF-
ERENCE. COUNTRIES LIKE SUDAN AND SOMALIA WHICH HAD REAFFIRMED THEIR NEGRITUDE WOULD BE WELCOMED, BUT NORTH AFRICAN STATES, UNLESS THEY CHANGED THEIR ATTITUDE, WOULD NOT BE WELCOMED TO BLACK AFRICAN
FESTIVAL AS ARAB STATES.

3. AGGREY SAID US PARTICIPATION IN LAGOS FESTIVAL BEING ORGANIZED BY PRIVATE US COMMITTEE LED BY THEATRICAL ARTIST OSSIE DAVIS, WHO HEADS NORTH AMERICAN ZONAL COMMITTEE. DAVIS IN CONTACT BOTH WITH NIGERIAN FESTIVAL COMMITTEE AND WITH ALIOUNE DIOP OF THE SOCIETY FOR AFRICAN CULTURE. PRESUMABLY, PROBLEMS SUCH AS NATURE OF NORTH AFRICAN PARTICIPATION WOULD BE RESOLVED THROUGH DISCUSSIONS IN WHICH DAVIS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PARTICIPATED.
WE HOPE UNITY OF FESTIVAL CAN BE MAINTAINED, BUT IN ANY CASE USG ROLE ESSENTIALLY ONE OF ASSISTING US COMMITTEE.
CLARK

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